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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City aims to recruit new vendors through fall purchasing expo

Purchasing expo attendees can learn about streamlined experience for vendors who wish to earn money by performing services for the City of Chattanooga

Chattanooga, Tenn. (Friday, Sept. 9) — The City of Chattanooga is hosting its second purchasing expo to help area businesses to bid on city contracts, amid ongoing efforts to simplify and streamline the experience of doing business with the city.

Mayor Tim Kelly has directed city officials to streamline processes and procedures for vendors in an effort to attract more local businesses to perform services for the city, and bring back those who may have stepped away in previous years. As a part of this overhaul, Chief Procurement Officer Kevin Bartenfield has modernized the city's vendor portal and transitioned to processing vendor invoices and payments through a single electronic system, significantly reducing the amount of time it takes vendors to get paid.

Additionally, in July, Chattanooga City Council approved an increase in the city's small purchase threshold from \$5,000 to \$20,000, which allows departments to make purchases of up to \$20,000 with one formal quote as opposed to three.

"Chattanooga's local businesses bring a wealth of talent and innovation to our community, and we are excited to introduce them to our revamped processes and discuss opportunities," said Bartenfield. "I particularly want to thank the City Council for their partnership in updating our purchasing thresholds, which has made it significantly easier for our small, local, and minority-owned companies to do business with the city."

The fall purchasing expo will be held on Thursday, September 22 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Hixson Community Center, 5401 School Drive. Businesses can register to attend [here](#).

Expo attendees will be able to meet with city purchasing decision-makers, learn more about the city's efforts to build a more equitable and diverse vendor ecosystem, as well as sign up and register as potential suppliers and receive training to begin receiving opportunities to sell goods and services to the city.

"By removing barriers to working with the city, we are enabling our community's small and minority-owned businesses to get plugged into the city purchasing process and add their services

and talent to city operations,” said Tamara Steward, chief equity officer. “This represents one more way that we can help close opportunity gaps across Chattanooga and create a more prosperous future for all residents.”

Purchasing representatives from Hamilton County Government, Hamilton County Schools, and EPB will also be present at the event, along with small-business support agencies such as Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, Bright Bridge, CoLab, Score, TN Small Business Development Center, UTC Procurement Technical Assistance Center, and Pathway Lending.

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